

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please insert after line 1, page 1, in the specification *as filed*, the following:

TECHNICAL FIELD

Please insert before line 6, page 1, in the specification *as filed*, the following:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Please insert after line 30, page 2, in the specification *as filed*, the following:

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Please insert after line 2, page 13, in the specification *as filed*, the following:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Please insert before line 5, page 14, in the specification *as filed*, the following:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Page 25, delete the paragraph starting at line 25 and replace it with the following new paragraph:

As shown schematically in Figure 7, the [The] preferred embodiment of the present invention enables a slower speed device or devices 26 to be connected to faster speed device or devices 27, without forcing the higher speed devices to operate at the lower speed when communicating with each other and without requiring use of a Fabric. The slower link speed disk drives are available without limiting the faster link rate portion of the loop. Link rate

conversion is provided in a manner that is transparent to the devices involved and with minimal latency. Devices not capable of either the same speed or automatic speed negotiation can be connected together. This can be achieved in a manner that is transparent to the devices involved. Link rate conversion can be provided between links of any arbitrary rate (i.e. no special harmonic relationship is required). Fibre Channel devices incapable of the same link rate can be connected together. The apparatus is not required to be a "loop master". This means that a Fabric or other device that requires being a loop master can still be connected if desired. The apparatus can provide intelligent bypassing.